

**THE SOCIAL CONFLICT OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE REFLECTED  
AT WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE DRAMA *THE LIFE AND THE DEATH  
OF KING JOHN* DRAMA (1959): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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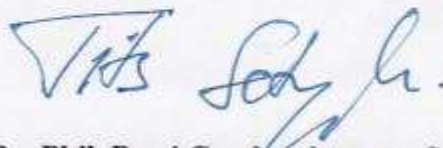
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**ABSTRACT**

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*This study is about social conflict of England and France. The problem statement of the study is “how the social conflict of England and French is reflected At William Shakespeare Drama The Life and The Death of King John Drama (1959)”. In this research, the objective of the study is to analyze social conflict reflected in the play’ The Life and The Death of King John (1959) drama based on sociological perspective. The object of the study is social conflict of England and French is reflected At William Shakespeare Drama The Life And The Death Of King John Drama (1959). It is analyzed using sociological perspective by using qualitative research types. There are two types of data sources they are: The primary data source is The Life And The Death Of King John Drama (1959) by William Shakespear; and secondary data sources are the other sources related with this study such as books, website and other source that support this study. The results of this study shows the following conclusion: first, based on structural analysis Shakespeare delivers message that loving our country can give spirit to success. Second, social conflict that appears in the play The Life and Death of King John drama shows from internal conflict between King John with Constance and Arthur, that grab the throne.*

**Key words:** *Social Conflict, England and French, The Life And The Death Of King John Drama, sociology approach.*

## A. Background

According to Karl Marx (1971) in all stratified societies there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The ruling class derives its power from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes.

*The Life and Death of King John* is written in 1599, it is one of the collection dramas from William Shakespeare which is popular in the world. This work was published by the Electronic Series. William Shakespeare is a national poet from England, he born on April 23<sup>th</sup> 1564. According to William (1965: 323) *The Life and Death of King John* is a history play by William Shakespeare, dramatize the reign of John, King of England (1199-1216), son of Henry II of England with Eleanor of Aquitaine and father of Henry III of England. This play was belived to have been written in the mid-1590s but was not published until it appeared in the forst folio in 1623.

*The Life and Death of King John* is an interesting drama by Shakespeare. There are three reasons, why the researcher observes this drama. First, the drama was adapted from the history of England with all of the problems that make it be interesting.

Second reason is the conflict between John and Arthur. Arthur and his mother (Constance) can't accept that John be the King. They think that Arthur is the rightful to the throne than John, because Arthur

is the son of Richard I (The King before) whereas John is brother of Richard I.

The third reason is in *The Life and Death of King John* drama, the conflict happens between England and France begins from internal conflict in England Kingdom. They fight each other to get the throne. Arthur Mother's propose King of France, Philip to help her in overthrow the King John, and it cause a war between England and France.

This research focus on the study to describe *The Life and The Death of King John* (1959) based on structural elements of the drama, and also to analyze social conflict reflected in the play' *The Life and The Death of King John* (1959) drama based on sociological perspective.

## **B. Method**

### **1. Participants**

The subject of this study is drama from William Shakespeare *The Life And The Death Of King John* (1959). The object of the study is social conflict of England and French is reflected At It is analyzed using sociological perspective.

### **2. The Data**

There are two types of data sources that are needed to do this study; they are primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source is *The Life And The Death Of King John* Drama (1959) by William Shakespear. The secondary data sources are the other

sources related with this study such as books, website and other source that support this study. The writer uses some steps to collect the data, such as: Reading the text Drama frequently; Determining the main point of the Drama that will be analyzed; Taking some notes of the important part from primary and the secondary data source; Selecting the data, by eliminating the information that are not relevant and search the information that relevant support the topic of the research.

### **3. Procedure**

The technique that writer used in analyzing the data is descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The analysis concerns with the structural elements and *analysis* of the drama on social conflict of England and French is reflected At William Shakespeare Drama *The Life And The Death Of King John* Drama (1959) based on sociological perspective.

### **C. Result**

There are many aspects which influence William Shakespeare when creating this play. William Shakespeare creates the character of King John to tell the social condition of England in Elizabeth era. Shakespeare compares King John like Elizabeth that tries to keep England.

The social aspect is divided into three classes, they are: upper class, middle class, and low class. Upper class uses their power to keep the Kingdom. In this play the Upper class is King John and King Philip. The second is middle class, the middle class make balance in society

such as: Lord, Sherrif, Heralds. They help King to control the Kingdom. Third is lower class, lower class is servant and low armies like Essex and Gurney. The social aspect gives contributes the theme in this play, namely “Patriotism”.

The social conflict that appears in the play *The Life and Death of King John* drama shows from internal conflict between King John with Constance and Arthur. Constance and Arthur want to grab the throne from King John, because they think that Arthur is the true King. He is fairer to be the King than King John.

Because Constance and Arthur feel not recognized, then they ask help to King Philip, France. King Philip deals to help Constance and Arthur. Afterwards, King Philip sent an ambassador to England.

CHATILLON:  
Philip of France, in right and true behalf  
Of thy deceased brother Geffrey's son,  
Arthur Plantagenet, lays most lawful claim  
To this fair island and the territories,  
To Ireland, Poictiers, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,  
Desiring thee to lay aside the sword  
Which sways usurpingly these several titles,  
And put these same into young Arthur's hand,  
Thy nephew and right royal sovereign.  
(KJ, Act I, Scene i)

And here, the social conflict between England and French is starting. King John won't give the throne to Arthur, because he is the suitable King than Arthur. Both King John and King Philip still defend their opinion, so war is the best way. But, after continuing the discussion they find another way. They deal to manage the marriage of Prince Lewis and Blanch of Spain. England also will give some island to France as the

thankfulness. Hearing this result, Constance and Arthur feel mad because King Philip betrays his deal with them. The lead of religion, Cardinal Pandulp also disagrees with John. He asks France to fight against King John.

Finally Arthur is brought to England, King John commands Hubert to kill Arthur, but he didn't do that. Because Arthur feels there is no reason to live, he kills himself by jumping from the castle.

The engagement between England and France fails. The war can't be prevented. Finally the social conflict between England and French begot the dead of King John, King Philip, Queen Ellinor, Constance and Arthur.

The economic condition in England gives contribution to the characters and characterization. King John is reflection of high economy. The economic aspect appears after King John gets problem from Catholic Rome after King Richard's death. England in that time gave a freedom to all people to get money with all ways, although using a wrong way. It was don't because they had purpose not only to widen the power, but also to get much wealth.

Political aspect has impact for England. First, Constance and Arthur ask King Philip to help them to grab the throne from King John. King Philip sent his ambassador to England, Chatillon. Then King John uses his power to negotiate with King Philip. They get way to avoid war with marriage Prince Lewis with Blanch. Third, the pope ask to King



Philip to fight against King John because King John tries to fight against the pope.

Cultural aspects in this play are, such as: wedding ceremony between Prince Lewis and Blanch; death ceremony for Arthur's death. The other cultural aspect is language. The language that is used in this play is contemporary language because it is easier to understand than old English language.

Based on the analysis above the researcher concludes that social conflict that happened in this play is caused by internal conflict in England Kingdom. This play is about the grabbing of throne. William Shakespeare wants to tell about the patriotism for the country is important. He also wants to tell that theatre is important for in England. Theatre can help people to improve the economic, science, technology and social stability.

This drama also gives new ways in solving problem in England. After losing Spain in the battle in the sea, England becomes good Kingdom in Europe. The leader must take action quickly when England gets problem. The problems of England are Spain attacking, rebellion by Mary and Catholic. The King John action in this play to show patriotism work is solution for the problem. First, King John uses persuasive communication to control conflict. Persuasive communication includes dialogue and negotiation. The last solution is aggressive communication when persuasive communication does not work.

Based on all of the aspects that are reflected in *The Life and Death of King John* drama, there is a relation between the drama and social conflict between England and French. William Shakespeare shows that theatre has many functions. Based on the analysis above, there is a consistency in structural analysis and the main idea of William Shakespeare viewed by sociological approach.

#### **D. Conclusion**

After analyzing the play *The Life and Death of King John* there are some conclusions in this research:

1. Loving our country can give spirit to success. In order to elaborate the message, the researcher uses characters in the play, King John and King Philip. He makes the drama that every element relates each other.
2. Second, social conflict that appears in the play *The Life and Death of King John* drama shows from internal conflict between King John with Constance and Arthur. Constance and Arthur want to grab the throne from King John, because they think that Arthur is the true King. He is fairer to be the King than King John. Because Constance and Arthur feel not recognized, then they ask help to King Philip, France. King Philip deals to help Constance and Arthur. Afterwards, King Philip sent an ambassador to England.
3. This drama also gives new ways in solving problem in England. The King John action in this play to show patriotism work is solution for

the problem. First, King John uses persuasive communication to control conflict. Persuasive communication includes dialogue and negotiation. The last solution is aggressive communication when persuasive communication does not work.

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